

Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Policy Board
Metropolitan Mosquito Control District Offices
July 25, 2007

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Reinhardt called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. She welcomed all attendees and invited them to introduce themselves.

Chairperson Reinhardt then shared an announcement from the Mn GIS/LIS Consortium (http://www.mngislis.org/associations/6078/files/polaris_winners/randy_johnson.htm) that the Staff Coordinator has been selected as a 2007 recipient of its Polaris Award for mid-career GIS professionals and that she had accepted an invitation to attend the award presentation in October.

Members Present: Jim Kordiak (Anoka County), Tom Egan (Dakota County), Scott Simmer for Randy Johnson (Hennepin County), Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County), Molly O'Rourke for Dennis Hegberg (Washington County), Roger Lake (Metro Watershed Districts), Tony Pistilli (Metropolitan Council), Terry Schneider (AMM- City of Minnetonka), and Dick Carlstrom for Dan Cook (School Districts - TIES).

Members Absent: Tom Workman (Carver County), and Joseph Wagner (Scott County)

Coordinating Committee Members Present: David Arbeit, William Brown, David Claypool, David Drealan, Jane Harper, Randy Knippel, Nancy Read, and Mark Vander Schaaf.

Support Staff: Randall Johnson, Christopher Kline, and Jonathan Blake (Richardson Richter Associates and member of the Staff Support Team)

Visitors: Jessica Deegan (Metropolitan Council) and Alison Slaats (Metropolitan Council)

2. ACCEPT AGENDA

Member Pistilli moved and Member Kordiak seconded to approve the proposed agenda, as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

3. MEETING SUMMARY

Member Pistilli moved and Member Egan seconded to approve the April 25, 2007 meeting summary, as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

4. GIS TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION

The New "Maps" at the Metropolitan Council

Alison Slaats, GIS Applications Developer with the Metropolitan Council, started by introducing herself and Jessica Deegan, GIS Web Developer with the Metropolitan Council. Slaats explained that the new *Maps* feature on the Council's website is the result of a Council decision to expand its presence on the web and make maps and data more accessible to the public. According to Slaats, prior to the introduction of *Maps*, the content on the Council's site was disorganized, hard to access, or non-existent.

For context purposes, Slaats provided an overview of her own attempts to locate data on the Council's website, revealing the lack of organization and of data that one might assume would be available on the Council's site. Some data were also available in a spreadsheet format; other items were maps that were outdated or did not answer commonly asked questions.

Next, Slaats provided an overview of *Maps* organization and contents, which provides easy access to data from several disparate sources through an easy to navigate community profile format. Each profile provides links to charts, graphs, and pre-made maps that answer commonly asked questions posed by the general public, community staff, and others. In addition, a feature called "Make-A-Map" allows individuals to select from numerous available data layers to create a customized map to support a wide

array of business functions. Slaats closed her comments by emphasizing that the *Maps* application project relies greatly on MetroGIS Endorsed Regional Datasets; noting that the application consumes two regional dataset directly and the Council also leveraged the existence of three others by developing derived datasets that are consumed by the application. She also made a point of informing the Board that its work to foster adoption of standards, acceptance of custodial roles and responsibilities, and regional data solutions themselves make it possible for data displayed via the *Maps* application to be consistent across the seven county metropolitan area as well as trusted, greatly adding to the utility of the application to support decision making. A copy of the presentation slides can be viewed at (http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/07_0725/maps_at_metrocouncil.pdf).

Jessica Deegan provided the live demonstration of *Maps*. She provided an overview of the functionality of *Maps* by demonstrating the usage of various tools on the Highway 36 Reconstruction Corridor. During the demonstration, she demonstrated the ease of selecting a community and accessing the community's profile page. From there, Deegan illustrated the variety of charts and graphs available, in addition to premade maps available for each community. Next, she provided a live demonstration of the Make-a-Map feature, showing the Policy Board how easy it would be for anyone to add text to a map, perform a query and learn more about a specific feature, add and remove layers, and generate a PDF file from the application.

Slaats closed the demonstration by asking if the members had any comments or suggestions.

Alternate Member Simmer asked how the Metropolitan Council went about identifying the needs/preferences of prospective users of the *Maps* application. Slaats replied that the Council hosted a Needs Assessment Forum in August 2006 that included a variety of participants from multiple aspects of society – local, state, regional, and federal government; academia; non-profit; for-profit; medical; police; and fire.

Member Schneider asked if locally produced data can be integrated (piggy backed) onto this application so the user can in effect obtain what they need from one location. Slaats responded that in theory locally produced data can be added by doing that a number of policy issues, in particular standards, are involved; issues that could be within the purview of MetroGIS to address. Vander Schaaf added that the idea of such a one-stop website came up at the August 2006 needs assessment but to keep the project focused the scope was limited that demonstrated. Member Egan asked if instead of hosting the data on their own site, if the Metropolitan Council could provide a link to the local site. Member Schneider replied that then the data on the local site would not be able to be integrated with the *Maps* tool, rendering it useless for the purposes of people using the Make-A-Map tool.

Member Pistilli asked if there were software limitations on the amount of data that could be added, and why would counties not want to leverage the existence of *Maps*. Slaats replied that there is no limit, but coordination between Metropolitan Council and the Counties would be an issue because due to numerous different data formats. Expanding standardization of data creation practices would help resolve this. Slaats reiterated that this question raises policy matters regarding coordinating investments in geospatial among the stakeholders which is a significant component of the Next-Generation Business Plan.

Chairperson Reinhardt thanked both Deegan and Slaats for their presentation.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

a) 2007 Regional GIS Projects – Final Endorsement

b) Amended 2007 MetroGIS Budget for Fostering Collaboration

Chairperson Reinhardt introduced the consent agenda, asking the members of the Board if anyone wished either of the items to be pulled from the consent agenda. Hearing none, she called for a motion to approve.

Motion (Both Items): Member Egan moved and Member Pistilli seconded to approve the actions requested for both of consent agenda items. Motion carried, ayes all.

6. ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Next-Generation MetroGIS Business Plan

Chairperson Reinhardt introduced this agenda item, providing an overview of the process that would be used at this meeting to review the items for which the Coordinating Committee had requested direction from the Policy Board. She emphasized that while there are only thirteen items presented for Board direction by the Committee, the Committee has reached agreement on over seventy other strategies that it intends to include in the Next-Generation Business Plan. She then introduced William Brown, Chairperson of the Coordinating Committee, and Nancy Read, Chairperson of the Business Planning Oversight Team to present the Committee's concerns and suggestions for Board direction.

Brown started the presentation by providing a review of the actions taken by the Board at the April Board meeting. Next he shared the proposed Business Planning development schedule with the Board, which calls for adoption at the Board's October meeting. He then began the consideration of each of the thirteen subject areas.

[Editor's Note: The items below are listed in the chronological order as reviewed by the Policy Board. They are numbered using the method in the July 25, 2007 Policy Board Agenda Packet.]

Activity Area 1- Strategy "a". Use Outreach To Promote Standards And Best Practices

Member Schneider suggested removing the reference encouraging the Governor's Council on Geographic Information to take a leadership role to bring all affected parties together to define a policy for internet distribution.

He commented that he believes that MetroGIS should approach interests that serve areas adjoining the seven county, Metropolitan Area, such as the collar counties, directly instead of relying on the Governor's Council on Geographic Information to take the lead in establishing standards for interoperability. Schneider believes that relying upon the State will take more time than necessary which could result in MetroGIS losing credibility by not being proactive. He emphasized that MetroGIS should approach prospective partners in a diplomatic way to promote standards and with an emphasis on removing barriers to data sharing. An approach of bartering, for example, would be useful: ask the partner to adopt standards, in exchange for access to the benefits of having access to services supported by MetroGIS.

Motion: Member Egan moved and Member Pistilli seconded that the Policy Board direct the Business Planning Oversight Committee to include this strategy, with the following modifications in the 2008-2011 MetroGIS Business Plan:

- Modify to remove reference to deferring to Governor's Council on Geographic Information (GCGI) to take the lead in establishing standards and policies necessary to achieve data interoperability with interests adjoining the seven county Metropolitan Area.
- Promote adoption of standards with interests beyond the Metropolitan Area (regional, state, or federal) via case-by-case negotiations with the goals in mind of eventual applicability statewide of policies and commitments to knowledge sharing and removing barriers to sharing/leveraging geospatial resources.
- Directly approach prospective partners beyond the Metro Area instead of relying on the GCGI to establish statewide standards, sharing what is learned with the GCGI.

Motion carried, ayes all.

Activity Area 1- Strategy "c". Secure Technical Leadership (Solutions to Shared Information Needs)

Member Pistilli commented that this and other desired new directions for MetroGIS are dependent upon obtaining additional technical leadership and coordination. He stated that he would prefer not to

wait until 2009, as is suggested by the language of the currently proposed strategy. He commented that he would be in favor of the Council providing the additional support for a year until the details of longer term arrangement could be worked out and the relative value to other organizations can be established. Pistilli asked Mark Vander Schaaf to investigate the potential of the Council providing such support, beginning in 2008.

Motion: Member Kordiak moved and Member Schneider seconded that the Policy Board direct the Business Planning Oversight Committee to pursue proposed strategy (secure Technical Leadership/Coordination support) immediately, as opposed to postponing to 2009, subject to:

- Support Councilmember Pistilli's idea that the Metropolitan Council consider funding of the desired MetroGIS Technical Coordinator responsibilities in their 2008 budget, with the understanding that options to share the cost of this support be given consideration once the value of such support is realized.
- Accelerate securing an individual(s) to provide the subject Technical Leadership/Coordination responsibilities so other strategies from the Business Plan can be implemented with expedience, instead of delaying these projects to the 2009 fiscal year.
- Integrate the solution for this need for additional Technical leadership with the goal to expand MetroGIS's stakeholder community to include private sector partners (next item).

Motion carried, ayes all.

Activity Area 2- Strategy "a". Identify Public/Private Partnership Opportunities

Member Schneider recommended creation of a private sector version of the Coordinating Committee, which would offer partnering proposals directly address their geospatial needs, as MetroGIS staff do not have the time or resources to effectively seek out partnerships on their own. The new committee would provide a focused means for non-government interests to share their wishes and recommendations with the Policy Board for consideration. This comment led to an acknowledgment that there will be a need to create a method(s) to assign a relative value to proposals but all concurred that these methods should evolve as specific opportunities are considered.

Alternate Member O'Rourke commented that there could be legal implications, such as bidding and contractual issues, from having the Policy Board approve proposals from a Private Sector Coordinating Committee. She recommended caution and more research into the issue before implementation. Member Schneider commented that although Member O'Rourke's concerns are well taken, they are subordinate to the concept of exploring interest in creating a means for cross sector coordination to address hared needs. He also affirmed that proposal must comprise a win-win solution which is more valuable than it costs government or it should not be considered.

Member Egan concurred that there may not be interest in the private sector for such a committee overall, and recommended that a workgroup be created to investigate possibilities.

Motion: Member Lake moved and Member Egan seconded that the Policy Board direct the Coordinating Committee to create a Workgroup, as soon as possible, to investigate interest from non-government entities in pursuing collaborative opportunities with government to address shared geographic information needs, as well as, the creation of private sector coordinating committee that would have representation in MetroGIS's decision making.

Motion carried, ayes all.

Activity Area 2- Strategy "b". Develop Plan for Shared Applications

Nancy Read, Chair of the Business Planning Oversight Team, introduced this topic, indicating that the first part of the proposed direction had been adopted through the Policy Board's previous action on Item 1-c. (Technical Leadership)

A brief general discussion ensued, where the members of the Policy Board agreed that plans for coordination with other organizations and fostering interdependencies should be addressed as they arise.

Motion: Member Pistilli moved and Member Lake seconded that the Policy Board direct the Business Planning Oversight Committee to continue developing a plan for shared applications, with the understanding that:

- Supplemental Technical Leadership/Coordination is needed in order for this strategy to be successful.
- The Plan should focus on the Board's general preference to foster interdependencies and cooperation, without attempting to establish a formal process or policy to guide these decisions at this time. The decision rules are best developed on a case-by-case basis.

Motion carried, ayes all.

Activity Area 7 - Strategy "d". Foster a Marketplace for Geospatial Resources

The members engaged in a brief conversation regarding the viability of this idea noting that it has possibilities but that the policy implications should be refined before there is any further consideration.

Direction: This concept should be resubmitted for Board consideration once the policy implications are better understood.

Activity Area 4- Strategy "a". Expand Support Resources

The Policy Board concurred this item had been in effect dealt with the direction provided for "Activity Area 1- Strategy "c". Secure Technical Leadership"

Direction: Not further direction appropriate at this time.

Activity Area 5-Strategy "b". Encourage Leadership to Assume Advocacy Roles

Brown introduced the topic, commenting that Policy Board members have previously advocated for MetroGIS's objectives on several occasions and through their service on the Board. Member Schneider concurred that advocacy from Board and Committee members among their peers is important to sustaining MetroGIS's relevance and support among stakeholders but he also believes that advocacy from Board members should be understood to be general and high level for the purpose of fostering opportunities for those with stronger understanding of the issues to move forward. He added that all MetroGIS participants should take any opportunity to discuss and inform potentially interested parties when possible. David Claypool, a visitor and member of the Coordinating Committee, added that in many cases Coordinating Committee members do take an advocacy position at conferences, meetings, and other functions that they take part in – but encouraging everyone to do so is important.

Motion: Member Pistilli moved and Member Lake seconded that the Policy Board direct the Business Planning Oversight Committee to incorporate include as a strategy advocacy of the benefits of MetroGIS efforts by participates at all levels as opportunities present themselves.

Activity Area 5- Strategy "a". Develop an Outreach and Marketing Plan

The Policy Board agreed to defer discussion of this strategy until the marketing "message" is clarified which can not be fully accomplished until the Plan for Shared Applications is complete.

Direction: Revisit this strategy once a suggested marketing "message" is available for Board consideration, the target audience(s) has been identified, and an estimate of cost to develop the marketing component is available. It was agreed that professional "marketing" staff affiliated with participating organizations should be leveraged to extent possible to work on this strategy as opposed to outsourcing.

Activity Area 5- Strategy “b”. Secure Dedicated Support - Marketing

As a continuation of the previous item, Member Pistilli commented that there are likely existing marketing resources available in participating organizations that can be captured.

All concurred the topic is premature until the message is defined.

Direction Provided: Defer consideration until the specifics of a marketing plan (previous item) are presented for the Board’s consideration.

Activity Area 6- Strategy a. Periodically Evaluate Board and Committee Membership

The consensus of the Board was that as a routine course of business, the Board will review its membership when it feels the need to do so, such as when prompted by additional counties or organizations participating in MetroGIS. There is no need to specify this action as a strategy.

Motion: Member Schneider moved and Member Kordiak seconded to strike this strategy from the draft Business Plan. Motion carried, ayes all.

Activity Area 7- Strategy a. Promote the Greater Regional Importance

The members engaged in a brief dialogue regarding “Greater Regional Importance” and the implications for MetroGIS and concurred that current practice exceeds policy and should be modified as suggested. Member Schneider commented that as MetroGIS has grown and matured, the need to operate by consensus may be subsiding, but also emphasized that inclusion of opt-out clauses remains important to maintain trust. He also offered that the suggested statement of principle represents a slight shift in philosophy, noting that stating it this way earlier on could have raised concerns by that as a matter of practice MetroGIS has operated in this manner. He believes and the other members concurred that it now acceptable and prudent to state the philosophy in this manner.

Direction Provided: The Policy Board recommended that the Business Planning Oversight Team convert this statement from a strategy to a guiding principle for inclusion in the 2008-2001 Business Plan as explained in the agenda report.

Activity Area 7- Strategy “b”. Foster A Common Philosophy Regarding GIS Return On Investment

Member Kordiak opened by asking what would be the harm of allowing data to be available free to anyone who wishes access, noting that if GIS services are important to government’s work they should be funded as a cost of doing business and not hampered by reliance upon cost recovery based support. Member Pistilli agreed. Following a several brief comments about how the funds raised are currently used to support services and the anticipated impact if this revenue is lost, there was general agreement that consideration of a broad range of impacts should be taken into consideration when setting these policies; that is, impacts that go beyond those of the particular data producer. The consensus was this broader perspective is necessary to achieve collaborative-based policies that seek to leverage existing investments. Board members also concurred that inward looking cost recovery policies, which consider only the producing organization’s perspective, are “old school”. Egan commented that this issue is bigger than MetroGIS. Cost recovery is another type of fee that needs to be occasionally evaluated to insure it is reasonable. He also commented that fees for public services should be given serious reconsideration if their existence results in/forces duplicative efforts elsewhere.

The Board generally agreed that the matter of setting/revising existing cost recovery policy is a matter that should be left to the producing organizations, in the case of parcel data, the counties. It was also agreed that if the counties want to leverage MetroGIS’s resources to aid in addressing this matter, they may but otherwise this matter is not within MetroGIS’s purview to pursue.

Schneider commented that this policy debate also should not be framed in terms of “Should the counties be asked to give up revenue for the common good”, but rather if a proposal is made to the

counties that promises to benefit the community as well as the counties, he would expect them to be open to considering it, assuming a case-by-case consideration of the specifics.

Brown commented that he believes the central policy question is “does the existence of cost recovery fees inhibiting collaboration/data sharing?” He stated that a study of the impacts (tangible and/or intangible) of cost recovery fees would be helpful to the discussion. If a negative impact is demonstrated, which he did not believe to be the case, consideration should be given to adjusting these policies.

Direction Provided: The Policy Board concurred that:

- a) The matter of setting/revising existing cost recovery policy should be left to the producing organizations, in the case of parcel data, the counties.
- b) If data producing organizations (in this case – counties) want to leverage MetroGIS’s resources to aid in evaluating cost recovery policy, they may but otherwise this matter is not within MetroGIS’s purview to pursue.
- c) MetroGIS should assist with obtaining any existing creditable research findings relevant to assessing impacts (tangible and/or intangible) of cost recovery fees on data sharing and collaboration to address shared geospatial needs.

Activity Area 7- Strategy “c”. Seek Legislative Initiatives To Coordinate GIS Investment

Chairperson Reinhardt questioned if this strategy would involve MetroGIS creating proposals for legislation, or supporting existing legislation proposed by others. The Staff Coordinator clarified that the strategy could involve either of both aspects, dependant upon the Board’s preferences. Chairperson Reinhardt commented that her preference would be that the Board support existing initiatives, but it would be up to the local units of government to lobby themselves unless they wanted MetroGIS to take a leadership role, and further that MetroGIS should not expect to serve as a clearinghouse for geospatial legislative initiatives pertaining to the Metropolitan Area. Board members concurred.

Member Kordiak added that multiple voices addressing the Legislature are often more effective than a single voice, and MetroGIS’s ability to align numerous interests presents a huge unifying opportunity to achieve objectives that require legislative action.

Direction Provided: The Policy Board concluded that on a case-by-case basis, MetroGIS should consider assuming a legislative advocacy role:

- When its stakeholder organizations ask it to do so.
- For its own initiatives, as appropriate.

7. MAJOR ACTIVITY UPDATES

There was no discussion of the topics listed in the agenda report.

8. INFORMATION SHARING

Member Schneider commented that the AMM Board is considering the option of inviting an official affiliated with LOGIS to serve in second Policy Board seat allotted to cities.

Claypool, member of the Coordinating Committee, commented that he would prefer to see more emphasis placed on seeking collaboration with the federal government interests included in the strategies to be presented in the Next-Generation Business Plan.

There was no discussion of any of the other topics listed in the agenda report.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2007.

10. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Prepared by:

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and

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